OFFICE OF **FEDERAL/STATE PARTNERSHIP**

Planning Grant to Establish a Provisional U.S. Virgin Islands State Humanities Council

Deadline: October 25, 2016 (for projects beginning April 2017)

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 45.129

Item referred to in this document needed to complete your application:

□ Grants.gov application package

Also see the **application checklist** at the end of this document.

Questions?

Contact the staff of NEH's Office of Federal/State Partnership at fedstate@neh.gov and 202-606-8254.

Submission via Grants.gov

All applications to this program must be submitted via Grants.gov. NEH strongly recommends that you complete or verify your Grants.gov registration at least two weeks before the application deadline, since it takes time to process your registration.

System for Award Management Entity records

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) requires federal agencies to make information about the expenditure of tax funds available to the public. To facilitate this, the applicant organization must maintain current information in its Entity record in the System for Award

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Management (SAM). You must therefore review and update the information in your organization's Entity record at least annually after the initial registration, and more frequently if required by changes in your organization's information or another award term. In order for your organization to apply for an award via Grants.gov, receive an award, or receive payment on an award, the information in its Entity record must be current. You can update your organization's Entity record here. You may need a new SAM User Account to register your organization or update its Entity record. NEH strongly recommends that applicant organizations update (or, if necessary, create) their SAM Entity records at least four weeks before the application deadline.

I. Program Description

The enabling legislation of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), an independent federal agency in the executive branch, authorizes it to "establish and carry out a program of grants-in-aid in each of the several states"—the term "states" defined as including the U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI)—in order to advance the humanities in each of the states. Through this planning grant NEH aims to facilitate the promotion and execution of excellent humanities programming in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

State humanities councils make humanities education and lifelong learning readily available at the local level, uniquely tailored to residents' needs and interests. They do so by drawing upon local resources and experiences. Successful humanities programming benefits communities by expanding knowledge of their history and culture and by promoting lifelong learning.

The principal goal of this planning grant is to enable the grantee to establish a provisional USVI State Humanities Council. After one year (in April 2018) the provisional council would be eligible to apply for a General Operating Support Grant[1] through NEH's Office of Federal/State Partnership, if by the end of the award period it has met the following governance, planning, staffing, programming, and reporting requirements:

Governance requirements
The provisional organization must
- establish a Board of Trustees;
- work with local government to establish board representation by gubernatorial appointees, as required in Sec. 956 (f)(B) of the legislation governing NEH;
- establish governing documents, including bylaws and a board manual with position descriptions, a discussion of fundraising obligations, attendance and advocacy requirements, lobbying prohibitions, information about recruitment and development, and a mechanism for reviewing the Executive Director's performance, goals, salary, and benefits (bylaws must also include a membership rotation process that assures regular rotation of the membership and officers);
- acquire IRS tax-exempt status, if needed (a requirement that applies to any nongovernmental applicant);

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[1] For additional information about General Operating Support Grants, see the General Terms and Conditions for General Support Grants to State Humanities Councils.

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- participate in a board orientation session conducted by Federal/State Partnership and other NEH staff; and
- undergo formal board training by an outside consultant, attended also by the executive director (a requirement that is designed to ensure the efficiency of board operations and to assist with the formal strategic planning process).

Planning requirements
The provisional organization must create a three-to-five year strategic plan that includes
- a business plan/model;
- a budget/financial management plan;
- mission and vision statements;
- a discussion of fundraising strategy and objectives;
- a communications plan encompassing both print and digital branding materials, a website, the establishment of a social media presence, and an advertising strategy;
- humanities programming and regrant plans and policies;
- a plan for cooperative agreement(s) with other cultural and/or educational organizations in USVI;
- a plan for public meetings with potential stakeholders, partners, and communities (as required by the legislation governing NEH); and
- a plan to involve humanities scholars in programming (as required by the legislation governing NEH).

Staffing requirements
The provisional organization must
- establish a fully qualified organizational staff, including a full-time financial officer who must be a Certified Management Accountant or (preferably) a Certified Public Accountant;
- publish an employee handbook/personnel manual;
- publish descriptions of staff positions;
- publish an accounting and procedural manual;
- develop conflict-of-interest statements for the board and staff;
- create an organizational chart;
- publish a statement of organizational compliance with nondiscrimination laws;
- create procedures to assure public access to information;
- obtain signed memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with both financial and programming partners; and
- plan for and schedule regular board and staff development training sessions.

Programming requirements
The provisional organization must
- develop a plan to support and publicize humanities programming throughout the USVI; and
- plan and conduct at least one public humanities event (to take place **within ten months** from receipt of the grant).

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<u>Reporting requirements</u>
<u>The provisional organization must</u>
- submit board minutes to the Office of Federal/State Partnership after each meeting of the board;
- submit quarterly reports to the Office of Federal/State Partnership on progress in governance, planning, staffing, and programming;
- comply with all reporting/disclosure requirements from the NEH Office of Grant Management;
- complete written assessments of all humanities programming (including any survey data obtained);
- submit copies of all MOUs with all program partners; and
- submit self-assessment report sections B2 (specifically discussions of humanities plans for the future, audiences, and communication strategy) and B3 (in its entirety) upon completion of the grant period. The format for the self-assessment report is available <u>here</u>. (Click on the "2012-2016 Core Document" PDF.)

II. Award Information

NEH will award a twelve-month planning grant of up to $300,000.

Cost sharing

Cost sharing is not required for this planning grant, unless the proposed costs exceed $300,000. (In that case NEH's share of the costs would be the first $300,000, and the grantee's share of the costs would be the funds exceeding $300,000.)

III. Eligibility

U.S. nonprofit organizations with IRS tax-exempt status that are located in the U.S. Virgin Islands (or are willing to relocate there) are eligible, including the University of the Virgin Islands. In addition, the USVI government is eligible to apply to establish the U.S. Virgin Islands State Humanities Council as an official state agency within the governor's office. Should the USVI government choose to establish the council as an official state agency, it must comply with all application requirements and deadlines stated herein. For-profit organizations are ineligible. Any other organization must apply for and receive IRS tax-exempt status no later than the end of the one-year grant period.

NEH will not review late, incomplete, or ineligible applications.

IV. Application and Submission Information

Application advice

NEH staff members will conduct at least one consultation visit to the USVI in August 2016 to answer questions about these guidelines, the application process, and the actions that will be required during the grant period. Prior to preparing and submitting a proposal, applicants are

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encouraged to check the websites of state humanities councils (contact information for the councils is available [here](#)) for resources related to council staffing, board membership, operations, public humanities programming, and community-based projects. Applicants are also encouraged to consult with the Virgin Islands Arts Council in order to learn about potential cultural partners and best practices for public programming in the USVI. NEH staff will also be available for consultations by phone and e-mail. Please direct questions regarding the grant application and the administration of the grant to the Office of Grant Management, at 202-606-8237 or GrantsMgt@neh.gov. Please direct questions regarding any other aspects of the application to the Office of Federal/State Partnership, at 202-606-8254 or fedstate@neh.gov.

How to Prepare Your Application

Your application consists of the following parts:

1. **Abstract**

   Provide a one-paragraph abstract (up to one thousand characters) describing the plan to establish the provisional humanities council and the anticipated programming to be carried out during the grant period. Focus here on key leadership positions, plans for formal partnerships, and evidence of success in nonprofit management. Applicants should copy this paragraph into the Project Information field in the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance—Short Organizational form. (See the instructions for submitting an application to Grants.gov, which are available on the [program resource page](#).)

2. **Narrative**

   Narratives are limited to ten single-spaced pages. The font size should be no smaller than eleven point, and all pages should have one-inch margins. Applicants should keep the application review criteria (see below, in Section V of these guidelines) in mind when writing their narratives.

   Answer the following questions in order. State each question as the heading for the answer to that question.

   A. **What is the history and mission of your organization, and how will it embrace the mission to bring excellent humanities programming to USVI?**

   Describe the organization's long-range objectives, and its strategies for reaching broad audiences, for building capacity, and for maintaining organizational efficiency and integrity. Articulate the vision for the organization and offer examples of innovative humanities programming that it will pursue. NEH is especially interested in understanding how the organization might forge partnerships with other cultural organizations in order to support operations and programming in the future.

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B. What qualifications and experience do key leaders have that will ensure strong managerial and governing oversight for the organization?

Describe the qualifications and experience of the key leaders involved in the planning for this grant. Include the leaders' respective responsibilities in fulfilling the grant requirements, their history working together (if any), and examples of their accomplishments in the past. What relationships do the leaders have that can facilitate organizational partnering, development, fundraising, and strategic communications in support of the U.S. Virgin Islands State Humanities Council? Do prospective board members have the education, training, and experience to provide strong governing oversight of the executive director and staff? Are board member roles and responsibilities, including committee structures, clearly articulated and feasible?

C. What is the potential significance and reach of public humanities programming for the citizens of USVI?

What plans would be made to publicize widely the activities of the council? How does the provisional council plan to reach audiences throughout the USVI? What special cultural, historical, and demographic considerations will inform humanities programming in USVI? What needs can be met by successful humanities programming? Are there opportunities for advancing the humanities as part of the tourism industry? Identify staff members who would organize these programs, and indicate the relevant experience that equips them for this task, as well as their background and training in the humanities. Please also identify any humanities scholars, authors, local historians, or other experts whom you will contact to support future programming.

D. What public humanities program will be conducted?

Describe the public humanities event that you will plan and conduct. How will you promote communal involvement and highlight USVI's cultural heritage? When will the event take place and how will you advertise it?

E. What is the plan of work?

Outline the steps to be taken, the sequence in which they will occur, the amount of time that they will take, and indicate who is responsible for each task.

3. **Budget**

Allowable expenses include staff salary, board training, programming costs (including materials to promote and execute events), fees for services related to public programming, the construction of a website, office supplies, mailing costs, and office rent. Equipment for public events, such as projectors and amplification systems, may not be purchased with grant funds; however, costs for renting such equipment, as well as rental of space for a public humanities event, are allowed.

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Grant funds may also be used for honoraria for humanities advisors and public program presenters.

Using the instructions and the sample budget, complete the budget form or a format of your own that includes all the required information. You can find links to the budget instructions, sample budget, and budget form on the program resource page.

If the applicant organization is claiming indirect costs and has a federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement, submit a copy of the agreement. Do not attach the agreement to your budget form. Instead you must attach it to the Budget Narrative Attachment Form (also known as the Budget Narrative File). (See the instructions for this form in the Application Checklist at the end of this document.) Alternatively, you must attach a statement to the form, explaining a) that the applicant organization is not claiming indirect costs; b) that the applicant organization does not currently have a federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement; or c) that the applicant organization is using the government-wide rate of up to 10 percent of the total direct costs, less distorting items (including but not limited to capital expenditures, participant stipends, fellowships, and the portion of each subgrant or subcontract in excess of $25,000).

Indirect costs are computed by applying a negotiated indirect-cost rate to a distribution base (typically a portion of the direct costs of the project). If the applicant organization is claiming indirect costs and has a current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement, include on the budget form the following information: a) the indirect-cost rate; b) the federal agency with which the agreement was negotiated; and c) the date of the agreement.

If the applicant organization does not have a current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate or has not submitted a pending indirect-cost proposal to a federal agency, you may choose one of the following options, if you wish to include overhead charges in the budget:

o NEH will not require the formal negotiation of an indirect-cost rate, provided that the charge for indirect costs does not exceed 10 percent of direct costs, less distorting items (including but not limited to capital expenditures, participant stipends, fellowships, and the portion of each individual subgrant or subcontract in excess of $25,000). This option is not available to sponsorship (umbrella) organizations. If you choose this option, you must maintain documentation to support overhead charges claimed as part of project costs.
o If the applicant organization wishes to use a rate higher than 10 percent, you must provide an estimate of the indirect-cost rate and the charges on the budget form. If the application is approved for funding, NEH will provide instructions in the award document on how to negotiate an indirect-cost rate with NEH.

If you choose one of these two options, please indicate on your budget form that you are doing so.

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Provide a summary budget for the one-year period of the grant (April 2017-March 2018).

4. **Appendices (letters of commitment and résumés)**

Each prospective institutional or organizational program partner, along with each individual scholar, advisor, or prospective board member must submit a letter of commitment signed by either the individual in question or by the head of the partnering institution or organization, stating their commitment to their respective roles in the mission of the provisional humanities council.

All applications must include brief résumés (no longer than two pages) for the project director (either the executive director or the board chair of the provisional humanities council) and other key staff and board members.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

The application must be submitted to Grants.gov. You can find links to the Grants.gov application package and instructions for preparing and submitting the package on the program resource page. **Be sure to read the document (PDF) that explains how to confirm that you successfully submitted your application. It is your responsibility as an applicant to confirm that Grants.gov and subsequently NEH have accepted your application.**

DEADLINES

Submit your application to Grants.gov on or before October 25, 2016. Grants.gov will date- and time-stamp your application after it is fully uploaded.

V. Application Review

NEH asks evaluators knowledgeable about the operation of state humanities councils, public humanities programming more generally, and best practices in nonprofit management to assess applications according to the following criteria:

The record of achievement, humanities expertise, and understanding of the USVI demonstrated by the applicant and the individuals associated with the application:

- Has the applicant been a valued member of the USVI community?
- Does the leadership of the organization possess sufficient humanities expertise and experience, and nonprofit management expertise and experience?
- Do prospective partners possess the requisite humanities expertise and experience to facilitate excellent programming?
- Has the applicant presented a strong vision for making the provisional humanities council important to the life of USVI's communities?

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The quality of the public program to be presented:

- Does the applicant describe in detail the public program to be presented?
- Does the proposed public program promise to be excellent?
- How well has the applicant described the range of programming initiatives to be pursued in the future?
- Will the organization be guided by appropriate standards and best practices, both in its internal operations/management and in its approach to public humanities programming?

The adequacy of the plan of work and budget:

- Has the applicant described in detail the substance and sequence of tasks to be performed to establish the organization and to carry out humanities programming? Is there a timetable and a clearly described budget?

Review and selection process

All eligible applications receive peer review. Knowledgeable persons outside NEH will read each application and advise the agency about its merits. NEH staff comments on matters of fact or on significant issues that otherwise would be missing from these reviews, then makes recommendations to the National Council on the Humanities. The National Council meets at various times during the year to advise the NEH chairman on grants. The chairman takes into account the advice provided by the review process and, by law, makes all funding decisions. More details about NEH's review process are available here.

Prior to making an award, NEH will conduct a risk assessment of successful applicants, consistent with Uniform Guidance §200.205. (See Section VI below for more information about the Uniform Guidance provided by the Office of Management and Budget.) This assessment guards against the risk that federal financial assistance might be wasted, used fraudulently, or abused. Based on its risk assessment, NEH will include in the award documents specific conditions designed to mitigate the effects of the risk.

VI. Award Administration Information

Applicants will be notified of decisions by e-mail in March 2017. The successful applicant will receive award documents by e-mail in April 2017. Award documents will identify the relevant terms, conditions, and administrative requirements that pertain to successful applications. The Grant Management section of the NEH website outlines all the responsibilities of award recipients, including anti-lobbying restrictions, in great detail. Applicants may obtain the evaluations of their applications by sending a letter to NEH, Office of Federal/State Partnership, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20506, or an e-mail message to fedstate@neh.gov.

In September 2015 NEH adopted without exception a new government-wide regulation for federal awards, referred to as the "Uniform Guidance." The Uniform Guidance applies to all NEH awards and is aimed at reducing the administrative burden on award recipients and improving accountability of federal financial assistance for tax payers. (See 2 C.F.R. Part 200:

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UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL AWARDS.) NEH will identify in each grantee's award documents the relevant terms, conditions, and administrative requirements from the Uniform Guidance with which the grantee must comply.

Help NEH eliminate fraud and improve management by providing information about allegations or suspicions of waste, fraud, abuse, mismanagement, research misconduct (fabrication, falsification, plagiarism), or unnecessary government expenditures, during the period of award performance, to the NEH Office of the Inspector General. You can find details on how to report such allegations and suspicions here.

VII. Points of Contact

If you have questions, contact

Office of Federal/State Partnership
National Endowment for the Humanities
400 Seventh Street, SW
Washington, DC 20506
202-606-8254
fedstate@neh.gov

If you need help using Grants.gov, refer to

Grants.gov: www.Grants.gov
Grants.gov help desk: support@grants.gov
Grants.gov customer support tutorials and manuals:
http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html
Grants.gov support line: 1-800-518-GRANTS (4726)

VIII. Other Information

Privacy policy

Information in these guidelines is solicited under the authority of the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 956. The principal purpose for which the information will be used is to process the grant application. The information may also be used for statistical research, analysis of trends, and Congressional oversight. Failure to provide the information may result in the delay or rejection of the application.

Application completion time

The Office of Management and Budget requires federal agencies to supply information on the time needed to complete forms and also to invite comments on the paperwork burden. NEH estimates that the average time to complete this application is fifteen hours per response. This estimate includes time for reviewing instructions, researching, gathering, and maintaining the

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information needed, and completing and reviewing the application.

Please send any comments regarding the estimated completion time or any other aspect of this application, including suggestions for reducing the completion time, to the Chief Guidelines Officer, at guidelines@neh.gov; the Office of Publications, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C. 20506; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (3136-0134), Washington, D.C. 20503. According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB number.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

☐ **Verify and if necessary update your institution's Entity record, or create an Entity record for your institution, at the System for Award Management (SAM).** Complete at least four weeks before the deadline.

☐ **Verify your institution's registration or register your institution with Grants.gov.** Complete at least two weeks before deadline.

☐ **Download the application package from Grants.gov.** The program resource page on NEH's website has a direct link to the package. (Note that Grants.gov tells you to download the "application instruction" as well as the "application package." The "application instruction" is this document, so there's no need to download it.) You can also search Grants.gov for this program.

☐ **Complete the following forms contained in the Grants.gov application package.**

1. Application for Federal Domestic Assistance - Short Organizational

2. Supplementary Cover Sheet for NEH Grant Programs

3. Project Performance Site Location(s) Form

4. Attachments Form—Using this form, attach your application as described in the guidelines:

ATTACHMENT 1: Attach your **abstract** to this button. Name the file "abstract.pdf".

ATTACHMENT 2: Attach your **narrative** to this button. Name the file "narrative.pdf".

ATTACHMENT 3: Attach your **budget** to this button. Name the file "budget.pdf".

ATTACHMENT 4: Attach your **appendices** (letters of commitment and résumés) to this button. Name the file "appendices.pdf".

5. Budget Narrative Attachment Form (also known as the Budget Narrative File)—Using this form, attach **only** a copy of the applicant institution's current federally negotiated indirect-cost rate agreement (or an explanation why you are not attaching such an

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agreement). (See the Grants.gov instructions for institutional applicants, which are available on the [program resource page](), for additional information.)

Upload your application to Grants.gov. NEH **strongly** suggests that you submit your application no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the day of the deadline. Doing so will leave you time to contact the Grants.gov help desk for support, should you encounter a technical problem of some kind. The Grants.gov help desk is now available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day (except on [federal holidays]()), at 1-800-518-4726. You can also send an e-mail message to [support@grants.gov]().

Be sure to read the [document]() (PDF) that explains how to confirm that you successfully submitted your application to Grants.gov. It is your responsibility as an applicant to confirm that Grants.gov and subsequently NEH have accepted your application.